



**Department of
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News Release

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VA Announces Madison VA Medical Center to Remain Open

WASHINGTON – The Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has announced his decision to continue inpatient services at the Madison VA Medical Center. Seventy-five nursing-home beds will be transferred from the Tomah VA Medical Center, bringing Madison to full capacity. The Tomah and Milwaukee VA medical centers will be renovated and both facilities will maintain their current missions.

"I am pleased that we are maintaining all of our medical centers in Wisconsin and, at the same time, dispersing nursing-home beds throughout the central part of the state," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Anthony J. Principi. "The changes we are making throughout this region will enable us to make the best use of our resources, redirecting them where they are most needed, and enabling us to treat more veterans in more locations."

The announcement is the outcome of a new planning process called CARES (Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services), which VA began in October 2000.

VA contracted with Booz-Allen & Hamilton to conduct the first CARES study in Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) 12, which covers Wisconsin, the Upper Peninsula of Michigan and the Chicago area. Nine options were announced in June 2001 for these three areas within VISN 12.

Following an extensive evaluation, three preliminary options were selected, one for each market. The department then initiated a 60-day public comment period. Comments received were reviewed by VA's National CARES Steering Committee before final recommendations were presented to the Under Secretary for Health, then to the Secretary for the final decision.

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In addition to keeping Madison open and renovating the Tomah and Milwaukee facilities, Milwaukee also will continue to supply spinal cord injury services. Three community-based outpatient clinics also are recommended in Green Bay and Wisconsin Rapids, Wis, and Freeport, Ill.

The Iron Mountain, Mich., VA Medical Center (Northern Market) will continue as an active facility and will maintain its current role as a telemedicine hub. A new community-based outpatient clinic is recommended in Gladstone (Delta County).

In the Southern Market, which encompasses the Chicago area, inpatient services will be shifted from the Lakeside Division of the VA Chicago Healthcare System to its West Side Division. The Lakeside property will be made available for other governmental and commercial uses. The Hines VA Medical Center also will be renovated, including the Blind Rehabilitation and Spinal Cord Injury Centers. Sharing opportunities between the North Chicago VA Medical Center and adjacent Naval Hospital Great Lakes will be enhanced.

The first phase of the CARES process was a pilot study. Subsequent CARES studies will be conducted throughout the VA health care system. This process is expected to be completed in two years.

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